INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 27391

LIMDIS

FOR BUNDY AND MACOMBER FROM BUNKER

REFS: A) STATE 205674 B) STATE 206495

1. I CAN SEE GREAT MERIT IN BRINGING VIETNAMESE DEPUTIES TOGETHER WITH AMERICAN LEGISLATORS. NOT ONLY WOULD IT OFFER A VALUABLE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE VIETNAMESE TO OBSERVE THE WORKINGS OF OUR CONGRESS AND EXCHANGE OPINIONS WITH OUR CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS, BUT IT WOULD ALSO SERVE TO DRAMATIZE OUR INTEREST IN THE VIETNAMESE LEGISLATURE. IT COULD SERVE AS A USEFUL COUNTERPART TO THE PUBLICITY GIVEN TO THE MEETINGS

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WHICH ARE HELD PERIODICALLY BETWEEN THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF OUR TWO EXECUTIVE BRANCHES.

2. I AM CONCERNED ABOUT TIMING, HOWEVER. THE PRESENT ASSEMBLY IS ENGAGED IN DRAFTING ESSENTIAL LEGISLATION AND ALMOST CERTAINLY IT WILL BE SO EMPLOYED UNTIL THE END OF ITS LIFE. ALSO, MANY OF THE MOST ABLE MEMBERS WILL BE HEAVILY ENGAGED IN THE NEAR FUTURE IN THE CAMPAIGNS FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL AND LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. WE WOULD BE MOST RELUCTANT TO TAKE THEM AWAY FROM THESE ACTIVITIES.

3. THERE IS ANOTHER ASPECT OF SUCH A VISIT IN A PRE-ELECTION PERIOD WHICH ALSO CONCERNS ME AND THAT IS THE RISK THAT OUR INVITATION WOULD BE USED FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES. MOST DEPUTIES WILL BE RUNNING FOR RE-ELECTION. THOSE GOING ON SUCH A VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES AS THE SELECTED GUESTS OF A GROUP OF CONGRESSMEN MIGHT WELL SEEK TO EXPLOIT SUCH ATTENTIONS TO THEIR OWN POLITICAL CREDIT.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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4. GIVEN THE ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS, I THINK WE SHOULD RECOMMEND THAT CONGRESSMAN REUSS AND HIS GROUP POSTPONE THEIR INVITATION

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UNTIL AFTER THE NEW LEGISLATURE IS IN PLACE. PLANNING COULD BE GOING FORWARD IN THE MEANTIME, OF COURSE, AND THE CONGRESSMEN MIGHT EVEN WANT TO LET IT BE KNOWN PUBLICLY THAT THEY ARE CONTEMPLATING SUCH AN INVITATION. BY WAITING UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTIONS, THE COULD ALSO BE MUCH MORE CONFIDENT THAT ALL OF THOSE INVITED WOULD CONTINUE TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS FOR A CONSIDERABLE TIME IN THE FUTURE. THUS THEIR EFFORT AND INFLUENCE WOULD HAVE MAXIMUM IMPACT.

BUNKER
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NOTE: PASSED S/S-O, WHITE HOUSE, DOD, CIA, USIA, NSA AT 8:35 AM 6/2/67

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